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Res Gestae

STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN LAW SCHOOL

February 6, 2007

Since 1950

Vol. 57 No. 8

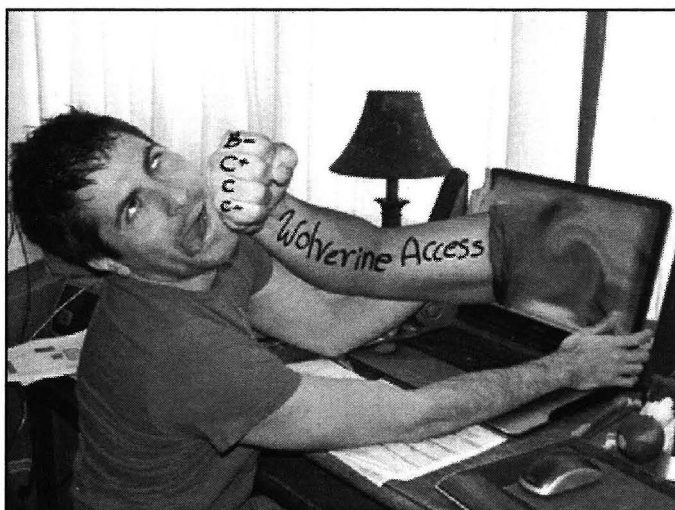
Grades: Some Perspectives and Advice

**Submitted by
Dean David Baum**

Based on more than a decade of counseling law students, I can tell you that nothing causes more anxiety around this place than grades. I've also learned that there are many myths and misconceptions about grades. My goals in sharing the thoughts below with you are to dispel some of these myths, provide you with some useful advice; and, by putting grades into perspective, alleviate some of that anxiety.

Myth #1: Receiving a poor grade means that I didn't learn what I was supposed to learn.

Many students disappointed with a grade will come into my office and say something like this: "I worked so hard in that class. I did all of the reading. I went to class every day. I wrote a great outline. During the study period, I studied for four days solid, and I went over everything. I really thought I knew the material, but I got a poor grade, so I guess I didn't." The fact is that most students here go into the exam room having thoroughly prepared and possessing a genuine understanding—and even a mastery—of the material covered in the course. Receiving a poor grade doesn't negate that. In most traditional classes at this law school, the grade assigned is almost entirely a



This student is down, but not out. He will close his laptop, walk away, and live to see another day.
Photo by Adam Dubinsky

reflection of a student's performance on an examination, compared against the performances of the other students in the class. (It is true that many professors make adjustments to grades based on class participation and attendance, but these usually are only very slight.) So a poor grade doesn't mean that you didn't learn the material; it means simply that the professor felt that your particular examination answer wasn't

as strong as many of your classmates' answers. There are some things you can do about that, which I discuss below. But realize that if you leave the Law School having truly learned the material in all your courses, then, GPA notwithstanding, you will have received the world-class legal education for which you came.

Myth #2: Receiving a poor grade indicates that I am going to be a bad lawyer.

Writing answers to law school exam questions is a very specialized exercise which is one way of testing a particular skill: legal analysis. To be sure, having the intellect and ability to conduct legal analysis is a fundamental part of lawyering. And certainly a law school exam is a relevant way to test for that skill. But even a student at Michigan Law School who receives mediocre grades develops adept legal analysis skills that

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Res Gestae

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Winning the Night Away

By Andrea Hunt

You gotta hear this one song. It'll change your life, I swear!"
-Sam (Natalie Portman),
Garden State

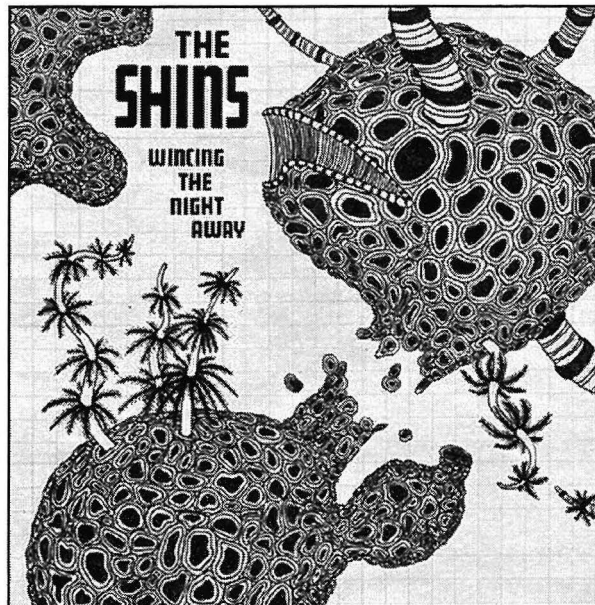
The song was "New Slang," by the Shins, and since Sam's bold declaration three years ago, fans have been waiting for the Shins' response — do you really think your music changes lives? Fortunately, the Shins seem to have ignored Sam's hyperbole, producing an album that is what the Shins truly are: introverted and low-key, not life-changing.

Winning the Night Away is the band's long-awaited follow-up to 2003's *Chutes Too Narrow*. Rumors of a new album circulated like a cold sore at Rick's. It was slated to be released in August 2006, then November 2006. Perhaps Shins front man James Mercer needed some rest — the title, according to *Rolling Stone* magazine, references Mercer's insomnia.

The four years since *Chutes Too Narrow* gave the Shins lots of time to experiment, with mixed results. The drums and bass in "Australia" overpower the vocals, but this sort-of Southerner enjoyed the banjo. "Sea Legs" is also percussion-driven and is a sharp, but pleasant departure from the Shins' earlier sound. "Black Wave," on the other hand, is like a melancholy "Sphagnum Esplanade," which was already pretty dark.

The album's first single, "Phantom Limb," was available on iTunes on November 14, 2006 and everywhere else a week later. It's a catchy, fun, and, apparently, Sapphic song — Mercer has stated that the song is about a lesbian couple in high school. Though the decidedly vague lyrics do little to support his claim, the reference to northern girls frozen into coats may, for some of us, always trigger images of these snowy Michigan months. The music video for "Phantom Limb" is much easier to interpret and can be seen on amazon.com. The scene where they cut off the goat's head is equal parts shocking and creative. (Now you have to watch it, don't you?)

The Shins seem most comfortable when they aren't trying to shock or change lives. They bring out the introvert in all of us, the dreamer who trips down South U, softly singing, eyes closed, occasionally bumping into people and maybe cars; the thumb-sucker who



Winning the Night Away, The Shins
Sub Pop Records, January 23, 2007

winces when the professor scans the seating chart, looking for a victim. What made "New Slang" so great wasn't that it changed lives, but that it was a theme song for the inner dreamer. "Red Rabbits" and "A Comet Appears" carry on that tradition. Their minimalist orchestrations, coupled with Mercer's wistful, plaintive vocals and characteristically opaque lyrics, beg you to lay in the Law Quad, staring up at the sun (when spring comes, of course). Just watch out for errant Frisbees.

Old People Form Group: Beware SQUALSA

By Austin Rice-Stitt

Whippersnappers beware: the old people in your law school class have banded together to form Michigan Law's newest basement group, SQUALSA. The "Senate-Qualified Law Students' Association" was unanimously approved by the Student Senate in mid-January, and the first meeting was held on January 29th. The RG was curious about what, exactly, all these old people are planning to do with their new group, so we sat down with co-founders Ted Whalen and Maili Shaffer to find out.

Res Gestae: Thanks for taking some time to talk with us. I want to start with the question that I know is on everyone's mind: Is there going to be bingo?

Ted Whalen: Of course.

RG: How old do you have to be to play?

Maili Shaffer: We started the group with people who are 30, or who will turn 30 before they graduate, in mind. But the group and its activities are open to everyone, and we hope that the law school's younger members will come out as well. Just because you've never had a real job and you're still being supported by your parents doesn't mean that you don't love bingo.

RG: Exactly. In addition to the lack of organized bingo opportunities, what do you think are the biggest problems confronting old people at the law school?

TW: Most students at the law school face the same challenges—making friends, doing well in class, getting along with professors— but every type of student brings different issues to the table. It can be difficult, especially at first, for older students to feel that they are a part of the social fabric of the school. Older students aren't always into doing the same things

in the same ways as younger students, and older students also have other commitments like families and long term partners to deal with. Also, we don't all live at the law school like many of our younger counterparts.

RG: Are you saying that there aren't ample opportunities for old people to meet each other? What's about bar night at Rick's?

MS: We expect that SQUALSA will continue to be well-represented at bar night, and the youngsters will be disappointed if they think that the formation of SQUALSA means that us older students are going to stop grinding the hell out of our classmates to really, really bad music at Rick's. But we are also planning to hold social events that appeal to an older crowd – events where people can have conversations and where kids and spouses can come without getting beer spilled on them.

RG: I see. What's up with that name, SQUALSA, anyway?

MS: It could have been a lot worse. It's an homage to the Constitution because of the 30 year old age requirement for Senate members. It's kind of tongue in cheek though –we don't actually take ourselves very seriously.

RG: But it isn't completely a joke?

TW: No not completely. We had a great turn out at the first meeting –about 40 students– so the interest is definitely out there. Most of the people who came to the meeting were 1Ls, so we're hoping that more 2 and 3Ls will get involved and help us out. We may be old, but unlike the youngsters, we don't know everything.

Interested in SQUALSA? Send an email to Ted at tewhalen@umich.edu or Maili at mkshaff@umich.edu.

Law Students Bare Souls For Free:

♥♥♥♥

Please don't close your eyes and 12(b)(6) my love, I hang on all your words, as if your sentences have no beginning or end....tell me that the light is green at the corner of State and Hill.

♥♥♥♥

You should probably know that my two favorite things in the world are going running with you and taking naps with you. Sometimes you get carried away biting my ears and shit, but let's be real. I am yours forever.

♥♥♥♥

Dear "Nordic" god,

FACT: You are hot stuff.

FACT: I have a big crush on you, but Valentine's Day is a non-event.

QUESTION: Would you like to eat chocolate fudge pudding and frozen dairy topping with me tonight?

FACT: I will wash the dishes if you make the pudding!

Love, The Little Counselor

♥♥♥♥

Dearest Vulpine Vixen,

You make me swoon when you serve Zingerman's instead of Cottage Inn at your organization's events.

Love, Delicate(ssen)

♥♥♥♥

CONTINUED on Page 4



Ask Sandra D.

Three Sizes Fit Most: V-Day Advice

These cold winter days are the perfect time to warm up with a hot Valentine's Day romance. Are you afraid this dreary, snow-covered city has nothing for you and your love? Ha! We have some hot date ideas for any law student's needs.

The Study Date

Wake up your sweetie with a hot double espresso to rev you up for hours of... studying. If you are at a serious place in your relationship you might want to go to Starbucks, otherwise snack bar coffee should be fine.

After your Valentine's classes, you might want to skip lunch because there is no time to waste if you want to get those book awards. (What is more romantic than matching book awards?) For a study break, you can find each other's *alma maters* on the stained glass windows in the Reading Room.

Dinner is a must, and the perfect way to keep your brains gearing while eating a great meal is eating up a storm at Leopold's over an even crazier game of chess! Finish off that meal with a romantic sundae for two. We especially recommend Washtenaw Dairy, where a little ice cream goes a long way.

The Fun Date

The perfect beginning to a fun Valentine's Day is a perfect breakfast. Try chocolate chip pancakes shaped like Mickey Mouse's head. If you want to be daring with a romantic touch, add some baby heart pancakes.

Walk your valentine to class reminiscing on fun times and funny jokes. Skipping is not mandatory but highly recommended.

While your valentine is enduring a long day of classes, make sure to brighten up their day with a singing Valogram from The Headnotes; and, after class, meet them with some cheesy Valentine's Day balloons.

A great way to end the night is with a few drinks and karaoke at Blind Pig. If the day has gone really well, the perfect ending to the night is you serenading your valentine with "I Got You Babe." We all know there is only one place to go after that....

The Steamy Date

You want to wake up your hottie, sexy-style. And by sexy style we mean sexy time; and, by sexy time, we mean with hot griddle cakes, omelet eggs, drizzling syrup, hot steaming coffee, and orange juice. A nice RG to read on the side will add the perfect steamy touch.

Next, escort your love to class where they can do that whole law school thing and you can begin preparing for your afternoon. After class, you don't want to set the bar too high--save the super steam for later on tonight.

This is the perfect time to satisfy your date's afternoon appetite so they are fully charged for later on. Red Hot Lovers may seem like the obvious choice, but have you seen Rick's by day? Suddenly transformed into the swanky American Café, it is the perfect romantic spot.

Finish off your night with a couple's massage at any of the local spas. A romantic dinner afterward is key. If you want something a little fancy the Earle is a good choice, or try out any of the quaint selections on Main Street. Make sure to serve lots of compliments sprinkled lightly with suggestive remarks. After dinner... well we got you this far, the rest is up to you!

CRUSHES, From Page 3

♥♥♥♥

Dear "Cutie Pie" 2L,

Rumor has it that you are headed to NYC for spring break... I may be there too and I hope to run into you. Maybe you'd be interested in grabbing cafe and a bagel...or maybe a mojito.

Yours, Gryphon

♥♥♥♥

Dear Angel-Kissed,

[Poke!] :-p

Sans Sans, Stargazer

♥♥♥♥

Dear girl who is not in law school,

It is amazing how you put up with my frequent beeps and legal tirades.

Love, Your Secret Admirer

♥♥♥♥

Dearest Woman in Culinary Club,

Nothing steams my mussel more than sitting across from you at the Earle Happy Hour.

You know the way to my heart

♥♥♥♥

Dear 8:45 AM class:

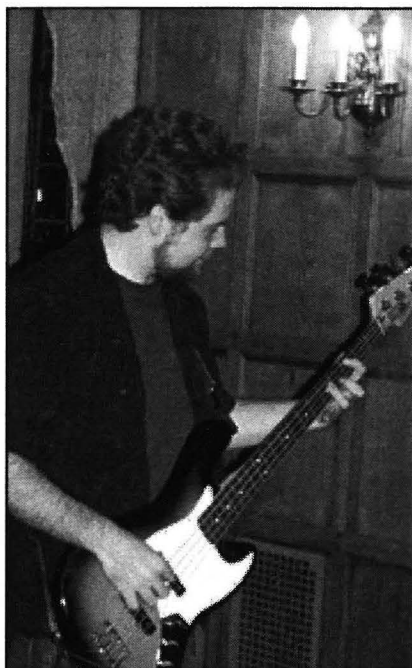
There is nothing remotely civil about your confusing, convoluted rules. You *are* a conflict of law. Three mornings a week I wake up crying because there is no Motion to Stay in Bed.

I hate you.

♥♥♥♥



School of Law Meets School of Rock The Law School Band Auditions:



Photos by Adam Dubinsky



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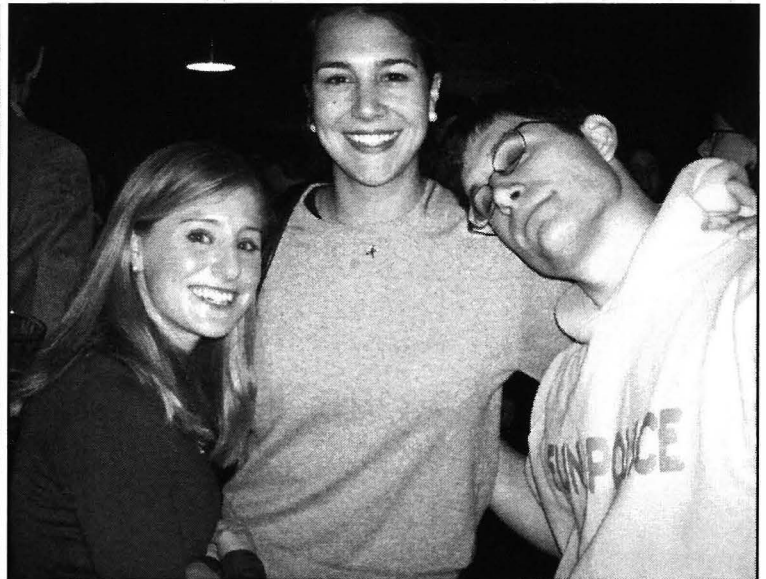
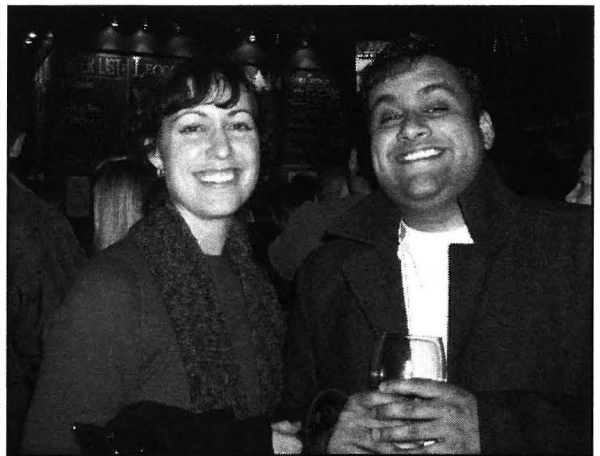
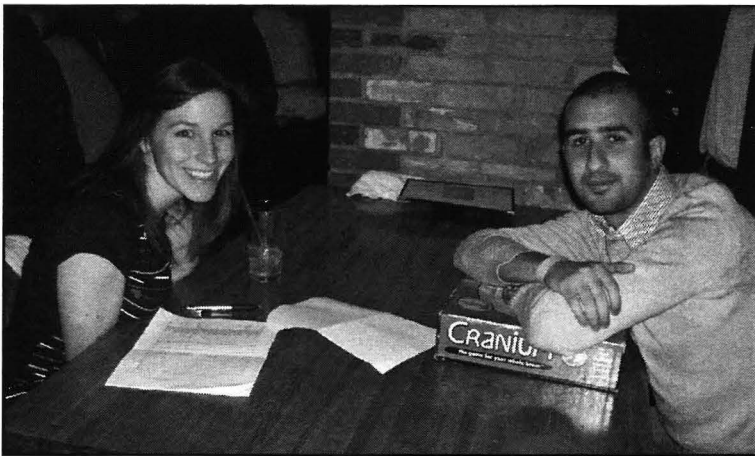
LSSS Bar Night at Mitch's, 1/25/2007



Photos by Sarah Molenkamp



LSSS Bar Night at Leopold's, 2/1/2007

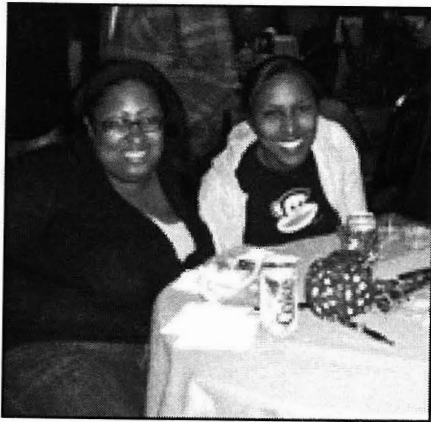


Photos by Katherine McKeon

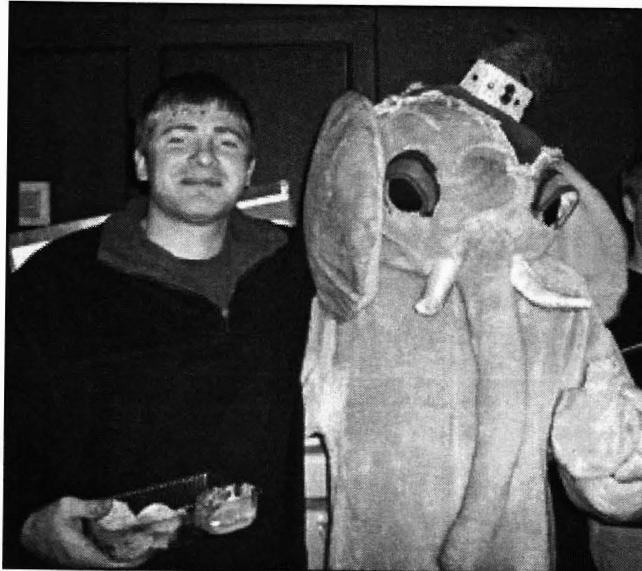
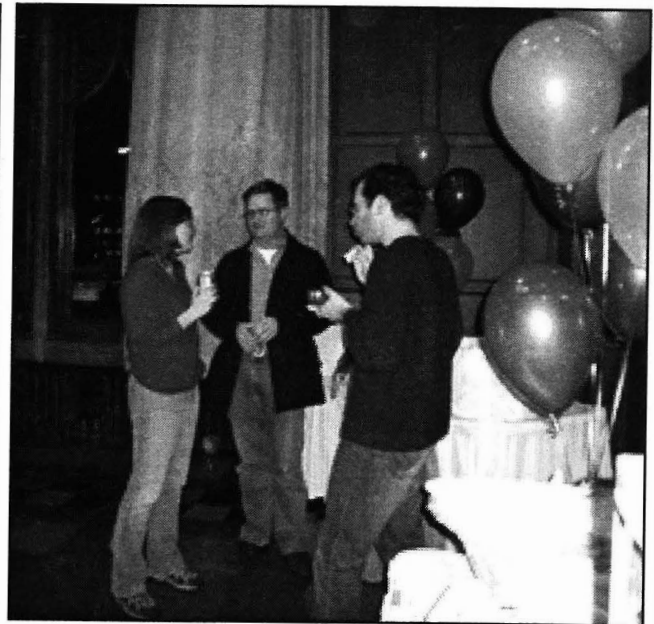




2Ls Celebrate Midway Madness

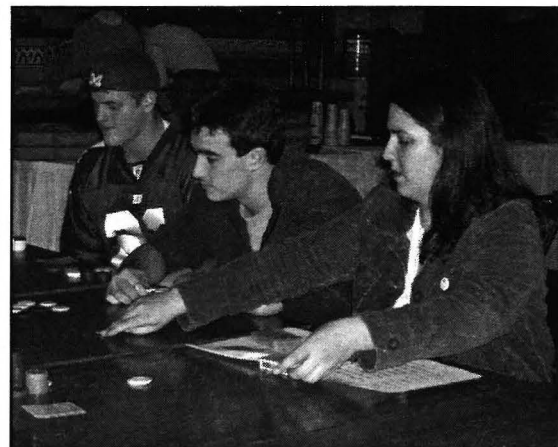
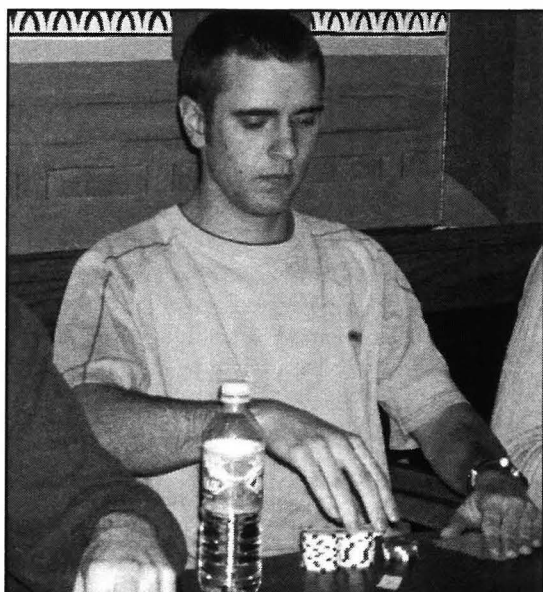


Photos by Edith Baise



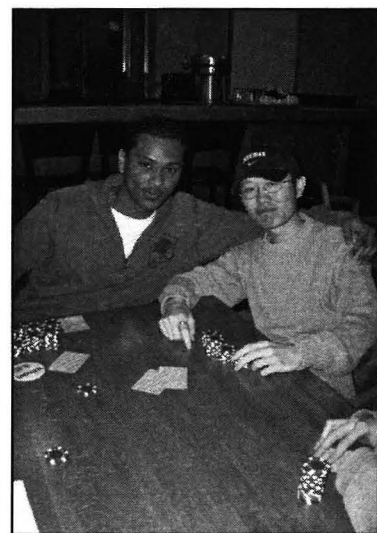
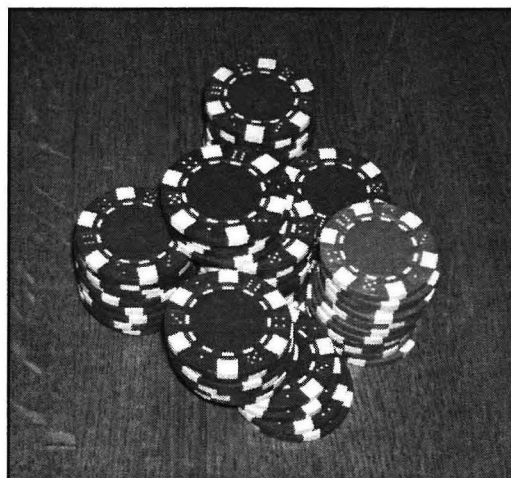
Know When To Hold 'em, When To Fold 'em

SFF Tournament Raises Money in Spades



The First Annual SFF Poker Tournament took place on Friday, February 2. Over 110 players took part to raise funds for SFF's fellowship program. Mayur Sajnani, an undergrad in LS&A, won the grand prize of \$500. Second place went to LS&A undergrad Nick Posavetz. The top Law School finishers were 1L Jason Ryu, 6th place, and 2L Dave Sillers, 9th place. Raising a net \$1400 for SFF, the event was an enormous success.

Photos by Katherine McKeon





Take It From Me:

Rhyming Rodent Receives Rage: Even Alliteration Won't Heal These Wounds

By Bria LaSalle

There have been few times in my life when I have been particularly cross with a rodent. I had pet mice as a kid, my sisters had a battery of hamsters, and I've always been fond of watching the Ann Arbor squirrels gorge themselves into oblivion in the fall. But last Friday, Punxsutawney Phil, the world's most famous groundhog, decided to tease me mercilessly, and I'm not thrilled.

That little bastard didn't see his shadow.

Now every weather correspondent for every media source in the country is gleefully announcing that we will experience an early spring. I refuse to be sucked into this madness. In fact I predict we will not see spring until July. This way one can average my prediction with Phil's and come out with reasonable accuracy.

But why does anyone put any stock in the weather-forecasting prowess of a member of the order *rodentia*? Punxsutawney Phil has, historically, been right 47 times since he began predicting in 1887; 39% is a failing grade in my book. I have better accuracy when I pick socks out of the drawer with my eyes closed, but the world has yet to establish a national celebration of my abilities.

But I don't begrudge Phil his station in life. According to his handlers, Phil enjoys a comfortable existence at the Punxsutawney Library, where he dines on dog food and ice cream. He is a zaftig 15 pounds and successfully negotiated the installation of a heating system in his simulated tree stump stage in Gobbler's Knob, where he emerges each February 2 at 7:25 a.m. to read a rhymed prediction. He has appeared on Oprah. He was in a great Bill Murray movie. During

Prohibition, he pluckily threatened to impose 60 more weeks of winter if someone didn't give him a drink. This is a success story for all groundhogs, and I fully support him in his arrival to the good life.

"El Nino has caused high winds, heavy snow, ice and freezing temperatures in the west.

Here in the East with much mild winter weather we have been blessed.

Global warming has caused a great debate.

This mild winter makes it seem just great.

On this Groundhog Day we think of one thing.

Will we have winter or will we have spring?

On Gobbler's Knob I see no shadow today.

I predict that early spring is on the way."

-Punxsutawney Phil

But I'm not willing to believe his tall tale of an early spring. My tenure in Ann Arbor is drawing to a close, and I find it more and more difficult to enjoy the trappings of winter when a long future in sunny Los Angeles beckons more with every passing day. But, so far, I have been able to successfully ignore the existence of non-wintery places. It's easier that way. My school work will suffer much more than the typical bruising from 3L malaise if I

let myself begin to detest painfully cold ears, runny noses that end in frozen snot, and puddles of rock salt on my wood floors. When the wind picks up mid-way through my walk home from school and threatens to steal the last of my body heat with its unjust aggression, I remind myself that "there is no bad weather, only bad clothing." I need to believe that this mantra is something other than the horseshit it plainly is, even though that requires a hefty dose of denial; my denial is fierce enough to work.

Theoretically, we enjoy our brief and nippy spring much more after staggering through endless months of frozen ankles. If I had a dollar for every sandal-footed undergrad who drapes lazily across the Law Quad grass within 20 minutes of the mercury passing 60 degrees for the first time, I would retire immediately and explore a life of naps and donuts. Perhaps I'll just surrender a dollar myself and join them -60 degrees sounds pretty luxurious right now.

In the meantime, I must ignore Phil by way of a deafness that comes from mild hostility. He has offered a completely unreliable glimmer of hope that I may be able to go hatless before May, and my winter coping mechanisms simply can't risk such devastation if this year follows his persnickety tendencies towards inaccuracy. If I'm wrong, I hope he'll accept my apology in the form of a groundhog-appropriate care package: dog food, a pint of ice cream, and the alcoholic beverage of his choice.

Bria LaSalle is a member of the order Primate, and is the Executive Editor of Res Gestae. She predicts spring will come on March 21, 2007.

A St. Valogram Story

By Adam Dubinsky

The quad was cold last February 14. Snow fell from Heaven, each flake melting a softly burning kiss into my cheek. Love was in the air, or at least the ringing sound of it—from 8:00 am to after 5:00 pm, the joyous harmonies of mercenary serenading resounded through Hutchins Hall. You all did your part. You bought valograms by the buckets. We ran from class to class, singing seven songs in some, struggling to complete our task on schedule. On one errand, though, I left my heart behind.

Someone sent an anonymous note to the pulchritudinous Vik Khanna and chose my song. It all began like any other Valogram, with longing gazes and suggestive gestures, but I somehow could neither tear my eyes nor my gyrations away. With tremulousness I approached him, this maverick master of mergers and markets. I reached out...and he took my hand. I stole precious time from his class, but with one deft movement, he stole my heart.

Purchase your own Valogram
Outside 100 HH, Wed & Thurs, Mon & Tues,
10:00 am – 4:30 pm

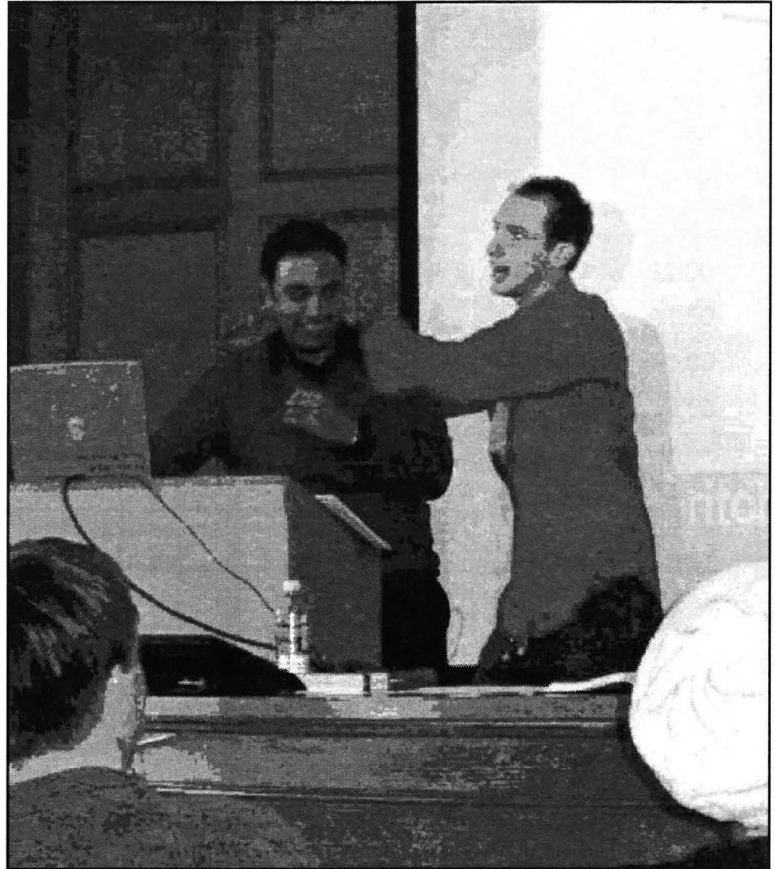


Photo Courtesy of The Headnotes

Got a problem only a Supreme Court Justice would understand?

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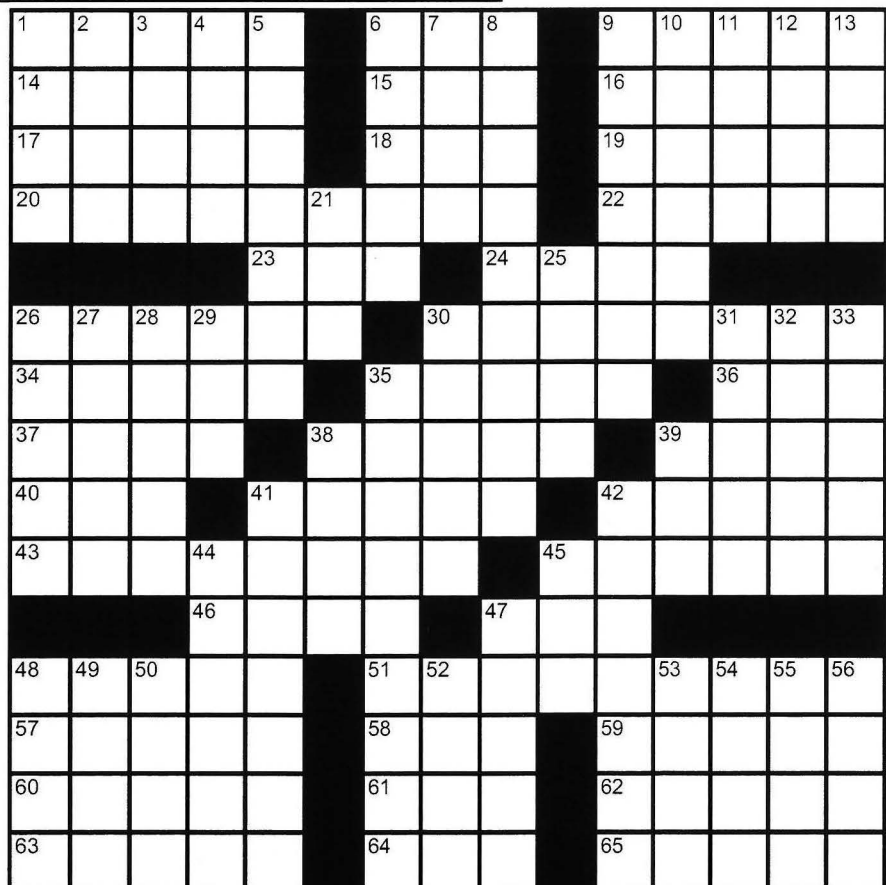
PUZZLE

ACROSS

1. Inflict
6. Ottawa, for short
9. Indian torture
14. Hungry, hungry
15. Before
16. Rise
17. Willow
18. Bow or score
19. Flip flops
20. Natural growth
22. Small island
23. Circle segment
24. Kournikova
26. Grave crime
30. Peer
34. Malicious look
35. One-celled protozoa
36. Exploit
37. From Arabia
38. Pilot sim.
39. Stigma
40. Bite
41. Not right
42. Chocolate source
43. Small falcon
45. Bumpkins
46. Vino
47. Unagi
48. Skylit rooms
51. Beatles' "wood"
57. Woodland
58. Sin
59. Atherton college
60. Dead language
61. Over follower
62. Daddy Warbucks' girl
63. Ice or board
64. Grass implant
65. Bird homes

DOWN

1. Horse command
2. Computer architecture
3. Record company
4. Copycat
5. Seoul inhabitants
6. Eye
7. Three
8. Adolescents
9. Mock orange
10. Salad or Roman
11. Lipinski jump



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12. Guard prefix
13. Attention getter
21. Do to a case
25. Beaks
26. Side
27. Creepy
28. Dancer jumps
29. Sphere
30. Accumulate
31. Prevention measure
32. Typical
33. Spanish currency
35. Nimbleness
38. Prayer's end
39. Hard wood
41. Theseus thread-giver
42. "What you takin' about, Willis?" actor
44. Dusky
45. Evergreen
47. Did #58 Across
48. Hole-makers
49. Tall evergreen
50. New Zealand tree
52. Sandwich cookie



Duby Says: Look for the answers next issue, February 20th

53. Heredity unit
54. Hotels
55. Dismount
56. Denials

No Other Warranties, Expressed or Implied:

The Wheels of Progress Grind Ever Faster ... and Ever Louder

By Nate Kurtis

I was at Amer's when it happened. Standing in line at the checkout counter, this ridiculously hot girl looked right at me and said, with a silken voice, "Hi, I'm Karen¹." Now, since you weren't there, a moment should be spent on Karen herself. Blonde and buxom, Karen looked to be no older than a junior. The rest of Karen notwithstanding, it was her ensemble –the very latest in nouveau-skank: a tight crop-top, form-fitting low-rider jeans, the straps of a black thong visible– that teased at the sheer carnality to be had by any man to tempt her.

Back in college, I wouldn't have been able to get the time of day from a girl like Karen; but, lately, I've been noticing this sort of thing happening more and more. Girls who wouldn't look at me before my grad school days are now walking up to me and introducing themselves! Clearly my Law School Cachet has been growing, and the ladies have taken notice. As for Karen, I did what any red-blooded male would do: mustered my deepest, manliest baritone and said, "Hey there."

I knew the moment her suddenly cold stare locked on me that things weren't going right in this conversation. That was when I saw the heretofore unnoticed cell phone grafted to her ear. Now that I think about it, this is how all of these conversations have gone.

Looking around, I found that Karen was part of a larger trend. At a table in the corner sat four girls, all talking on cell phones. Indeed, it was the rare caffeine drinker who wasn't talking, loudly, to someone who wasn't there. And the inclination to rude phone conversations

is spreading. Reading in Borders last week, a woman sat down next to me so she could talk on her cell uninterrupted, and did so for over forty minutes.

The noise pollution doesn't stop there. One of the few non-phoners in Amer's that day was a guy, let's call him "KF," listening to music on his iPod so loudly that I could hear it, clearly. While it is possible that KF was deaf –and if he wasn't before he sure is now– and needed the music up that loud to hear it. But, if he really is deaf, I think I ought to have a say in what he is playing since I'm the only one of the two of us who will have to suffer through it.

Fortunately, we at the Law School are spared these annoyances. Anyone playing music that loudly would be slaughtered in the Reading Room and the ancient gothic architecture of our buildings mercifully blocks cell phone signals. At least for the moment. Improved technology has opened up the halls of Hutchins to cell phone folks, and with them the loud, rude behavior that was once so alien to our quad. The school has taken some half-hearted steps to help, like the new "cell phone booths" in the basement of legal research. The fact that most cell phones don't get reception down there is beside the point (and if you do get reception down there, PLEASE keep it to yourself).

You see, as technology is making it easier to wall ourselves off from the world around us, or communicate with people who are miles away, we have begun to ignore the people standing right beside us! We are, as a community, becoming less considerate as a response, paradoxically, to increased convenience. I encourage everyone to stop for a moment and ask: "Have I been electronically rude lately?" You'll have to put down the cell phone first.

Now, I make no claims at electronic sainthood. I admit I have my own vices. For my part, I am a slave to GPS. That might not sound so bad, but think about it: Without GPS, I would be lost and confused, which means that I would be traveling at a respectable speed and paying attention to where I am going. With GPS, I don't have to bother with either! Indeed, it gives me the freedom to travel at 70+ miles per hour down roads I've never even heard of. You'd think GPS would at least help me drive more safely, seeing as I would know where I was going. You'd be wrong on that count, too, since my unit doesn't really give all that much warning about upcoming turns.

Perhaps the greatest irony about using GPS is that it is less help the more you know where you are going. Indeed, when you are lost on the other side of Ann Arbor and haven't a clue how to get back to campus, GPS is golden. However, when you know exactly where you are and need to find a more specific target, such as wandering the stacks of Legal Research trying to find the 6th floor, GPS couldn't be less helpful. Now, since the GPS unit I have is built into my car, this second case is moot (unless they make those elevators bigger). Still, how could I find my way around the Law Quad without GPS? I can't ask for directions! You see, I'm a guy. And, besides, who would I ask? Everyone is talking on their cell phones.

Nate Kurtis is a 2L and the Editor-in-Chief of Res Gestae. He is not sure where he is right now. Have you seen him?



¹ All names have been changed to protect the heinously guilty.

**GRADES, From Page 1**

put her at least even with—and most often ahead of—most other practicing lawyers. And I can assure you that when you go out into practice, you are never going to be asked to sit down in a room with a fact scenario and write an essay within three to four hours without consulting with anyone else and having limited or no access to relevant materials. What's more, high quality lawyering requires a wide range of other skills and talents, such as oral and written communication, good judgment, leadership, active listening, general problem solving, the ability to sympathize, interpersonal skills, negotiation and facilitation skills, organizational skills, and so on. All of you came with many of these talents and skills, and you have many opportunities here to develop them further. More on that below.

Myth #3: Receiving a poor grade (or even a few) means that I will not get a job.

Anyone who tells you that your grades have absolutely no impact on your job search during law school is not telling you the truth. The fact is that grades do matter to employers. But keep in mind that they matter to different employers to different degrees. I have heard that some employers will not hire students who fail to achieve a certain GPA. But countless other employers evidently do not have such cut offs, because even students who finish in the bottom half of the class at UMLS get jobs. Indeed, the Career Services Office regularly reports that the employment rate for our graduates is in the high nineties. So, the best advice I can give you is to be open-minded about your job search and work hard to find the best opportunities for you. Also, take full advantage of the excellent resources UMLS offers to help you do this, most significantly the top-notch staff in the Career Services and Public Service Offices. This advice applies regardless of what your GPA is. The more time and effort you spend looking for the right job, the more likely it is that the job you take is going to be one that is interesting, challenging and a good fit for you. You will find out that

as you progress in your legal career, your law school grades become less and less important, and your professional experience and accomplishments matter more and more. So, yes, grades do matter in your job search, but they matter a heck of a lot less than you think they do.

How do I know that all of this is true?

In large part I know these things are true because I have known hundreds of students who have earned less than stellar grades and who have gone on to become amazingly successful lawyers. But I also speak from personal experience. I was a very hard-working and serious law student. In every course I took, I completed virtually every reading assignment. I briefed practically every case. I almost never missed class. I put together comprehensive outlines. I was in study groups where I both learned and contributed a lot. I studied hard for exams. I went into each and every exam that I took feeling as though I knew the material cold. And I did know the material cold. My problem was that I was not a terrific law school exam taker. Consequently, I got some C-range grades in law school. And I had a whole bunch of B-range grades, and not so many A-range grades. This was tough on my ego, having come here directly from a rigorous and competitive undergraduate program with a very high GPA. But things worked out. I got summer associate positions with law firms during each of my two summers, and I got an offer from a large national firm in Washington, D.C. to return as an associate. I forwent that offer to pursue a clerkship in D.C. with a Superior Court judge (essentially, a state trial court judge). It wasn't a prestigious clerkship, but it was absolutely phenomenal. I learned a tremendous amount about the practice of law and developed a special relationship with my judge who to this day remains both an inspirational mentor and dear friend. During my clerkship, I received an offer to work at the U.S. Attorney's Office in D.C. I accepted that offer and practiced there for five years before returning to the Law School. All humility aside (and thank you for indulging me here), I was a very good lawyer. I was as able and effective as

all of the very talented people alongside whom I worked. I prosecuted cases successfully at trial, post-trial, and on appeal in local and Federal courts. I won awards and commendations. And, most importantly, I *loved* my work, which was wonderfully captivating and challenging, as well as completely fulfilling. So, I am one example among countless others of someone who made it in the profession in spite of having received mediocre law school grades.

So, if you get a poor grade(s), what should you do?

There are a number of things you can do:

- Find out how you could have written a better exam answer.

Read any model or "A" answers published by the professor. If your professor conducts a session to go over the exam, attend it. Review your exam answer with your professor. With respect to this last suggestion, understand that you should not approach the professor with an eye toward having the grade changed. The Law School's Academic Regulations preclude a professor from changing a grade unless he discovers that he made some sort of objective, quantifiable error (such as adding points wrong or failing to read part of your answer). Your focus should be on learning what you may not have understood substantively and how you could have written a better examination answer. I'll add that this is particularly useful if you received grades below the class mean. If you are consistently receiving grades of "B" or higher, then you are doing a fairly good job writing exam answers, so you certainly shouldn't feel as though you need to do this after every exam. Instead:

- Take other steps to become a better exam taker.

Besides finding out what went wrong on exams you've already taken, get some additional instruction about how to

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write better exam answers. Then practice doing it. One great way to get some help is by working with a tutor. Each year, Christine Gregory's office solicits and hires students who have done well on exams to work with other students. Tutors get compensated but are available at no charge to you (beyond the tuition dollars you have already paid). If you request a tutor for a particular class, Ms. Gregory's staff will try to place you with someone who has previously had that class taught by the same professor. One way of working with a tutor is to write answers to old exam questions and get her feedback on those answers. Ask the tutor to comment not only on your substantive analysis but on your answer-writing technique. Was the answer organized well? Did you have too much "fluff?" Did you over-analyze some issues and under-analyze others? All of this assumes that you are still doing the reading and regularly attending class. It is hard to write a great exam answer if you don't, and what's more, you're cheating yourself out of that world-class education.

- *Work on developing other lawyering skills and learn about the practice of law.*

Besides continuing to take your doctrinal courses as seriously as you can, as an upper-class student take clinical law and practice/simulation courses (like Negotiation, Alternative Dispute Resolution, Advanced Legal Research, etc.). Volunteer in the Family Law Project or at a law office in Ann Arbor or Detroit for a few hours a week. Consider doing an externship one semester. Participate in competitions. Attend attorney lunch talks and symposiums. Join a journal. Take a leadership position in a student organization. Put extra effort into writing a seminar or independent research paper. All of these suggestions will help you develop and hone the other lawyering skills I mentioned previously, prepare you for the practice of law, and even make you a happier law student. They will also give you more and better things to talk about during interviews and make you more marketable to prospective employers.

- *Make time for yourself to do the things you want to do, and take care of yourself.*

Every law student knows that if he wanted to, he could spend virtually all of his time working. Don't do this. You'll burn out. Your grades will improve only marginally – or maybe not at all. So play; rest; recreate; spend time with friends; call your family; exercise; watch TV; read a novel; volunteer at a soup kitchen – you get the idea. You'll have a much better shot of living a balanced life once you become a lawyer if you figure out how to do it now.

- *Come talk to us.*

I've already mentioned that you should go talk to our Career Services professionals and to faculty. I also want to invite you to come see Christine Gregory or me. We are eager to discuss your particular situation with you and offer further advice and perspectives. I'll add that very occasionally, students receive very low grades ("C-" or below). If this happens, Ms. Gregory and I can inform you about rules that enable you to do more work to get that grade replaced by a "C." Beyond all that, we want to help you determine how to have the richest possible experience during law school. And that's really the point of all this. Law school is, of course, about so much more than exams and grades. Sure, work hard in your classes and try to earn the best grades you can. But realize that there is so much more to you, too, and remember to enjoy and experience the rest of what this amazing place has to offer.

To make an appointment to see Dean Baum, call 734-764-0516. To make an appointment to see Christine Gregory, call 734-615-0019.

**EVENTS, from Page 16**

Fall registration! Featuring Professors John Pottow, Adam Pritchard, Dennis Ross, David Hasen, Alicia Davis-Evans, and Karl Lutz. 12:20 p.m. in 150HH. Lunch provided. This is Part Two of a 2-part lunchtime panel series for students interested in learning more about transactional law in practice, and pursuing a business-law curriculum in law school. See Tuesday, February 13, for Part One. Sponsored by Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21

Congressional Preview (MLSD): The Michigan Law School Democrats invite you to a panel discussion on what to expect from the 110th Congress, featuring Professors Sally Katzen, Marvin Krislov, and James Levinsohn. 12:15 in 250 HH. Lunch (Big Ten Burrito) will be provided.

Chief Judge Bernard Friedman (US District Court Eastern District of Michigan): Brown bag lunch with Chief Judge Friedman and his three law clerks to discuss federal clerkships and judicial internships. Sponsored by the Federal Bar Association - University of Michigan Law School Student Chapter. 12:15-1:15 p.m. in 138HH.

FRIDAY, MARCH 16

PROM 007 (LSSS): "Shaken Not Stirred"; Meeting House Grand Ballroom, Plymouth, MI. Law students are welcome to bring non-law students. Attire is semi-formal. Dates, tuxes, limos, corsages not required. Tickets go on sale Wednesday, March 7 at 12:20pm.





Law School Events

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 6

Is Habeas Corpus Dead? (ACLU):

Bob Gensburg, a Vermont attorney, talks about his work on a habeas corpus petition for one of the Guantanamo Bay detainees to be filed in the US District Court in Washington. 12:20 p.m. in 250 HH. Food will be provided.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7

Networking: What is it, Why do it, How to do it (Career Services): Al Cotrone, Director of Career Development and Student Affairs at the University of Michigan Ross School of Business, will discuss networking and how it can make your career a highly successful one. 12:15 p.m. - 1:15 p.m. in 250 HH.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8

Careers in Law Teaching (Career Services): Professors Ellen Katz, Phil Frost, Daniel Halberstam, and Vivek Sankaran will discuss their career paths and offer advice and information to those students interested in pursuing a career in legal academia. 12:20 p.m. - 1:20 p.m. in 220 HH.

Law School Bar Night (LSSSS): Conor O'Neill's, 318 South Main St, 8 - 10 p.m.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12

Representing Amusement Parks: A Legal Roller Coaster Ride (EMALSA): Cipriano Beredo, Partner, Squire, Sanders & Dempsey LLP Counsel to Cedar Fair (owners of Cedar Point and other amusement parks). 12:20 - 1:20 pm in 150HH. Lunch provided.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13

"Transactional Law in Practice" (BLA): Come hear high-profile, experienced corporate law attorneys speak about practicing transactional law. Featuring attorneys from Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP, Jaffe Raitt Heuer & Weiss, P.C., and Michigan Law professors Dennis Ross, Karl Lutz, and Nico Howson. 12:20 p.m. in 150HH. Lunch provided. This is Part One of a 2-part lunchtime panel series for students interested in learning more about transactional law in practice, and pursuing a business-law curriculum in law school. See Tuesday, February

20, for Part Two. Sponsored by Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP.

Entertainment Law & Business Mixer (EMALSA): Co-hosted by IPSA & the Ross School of Business Entertainment, Media and Sports Club. Downstairs at Ashley's, 338 S State Street; 7 - 9p.m.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 17

Juan Luis Tienda Scholarship Banquet (LLSA): The Latino Law Students' Association invites you to attend the Juan Luis Tienda Scholarship Banquet. Dinner & dancing. 6 -11 p.m. Polo Fields Golf and Country Club, 5200 Polo Fields Drive. Bus transportation provided. Tickets on Sale February 3 in front of 100HH. Questions, contact Knepley: aknepley@umich.edu.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20

Business Law Curriculum Panel (BLA): Current Michigan Law professors and 3Ls will speak about course selection and relevant course work for students interested in corporate law careers. Just in time for

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